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## DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS' EMPLOYEES' NEWSLETTER

MAY, 1989

### Larsen Comes to Highways

The baton has been passed to a new Director of Highways. Governor Stephens made the announcement March 13 and Larry W. Larsen, P.E., assumed his duties March 22.

Larsen comes to Helena from Carver Engineering in Kalispell where he was a consulting engineer. He formerly was a vice-president of Morrison-Maierle in the Billings office and served as an engineer and office manager over a period of 20 years with the company.

He began his career as an Engineer-in-Training with the California Department of Transportation and has supervised engineering work on highway projects in Montana and surrounding states.

Larsen served in the U.S. Marine Corps and is a past president of the Montana Society of Professional Engineers and the Montana Chapter, American Society of Civil Engineers. He was selected as the Outstanding Young Engineer in the Midland Empire in 1969.

Larsen hails from Belle Fourche, South Dakota and is a graduate in Civil Engineering of the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. He is a Registered Professional Engineer in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. ♦



### Cash for Ideas

Three department employees earned cash for a money-saving idea presented under the employee incentive award program.

Bruce Russell, district engineer in Glendive, presented the cash award of \$250 on December 7. Each employee received a check for \$83.33 and a plaque signed by then-Governor

Schwinden as part of their individual contribution to the award-winning idea.

The employees—**Cecil Lincoln of Forsyth, David Hamilton and Roger McCaffree of Ingomar**—received the awards for their suggestion to develop a new breakaway marker for bridges. The markers are already being used in the Glendive area and are expected to

increase the uniformity of bridge markers while reducing costs and requiring less maintenance when damaged.

This suggestion is expected to save the department approximately \$2,500 each year in reduced material and labor costs. ♦

### Inside:

Road Design Wins Again .....	2
ALF .....	2
The Extra Mile .....	3

18 Cypress Drive  
Havre, MT 59501  
March 1, 1989

Dear Highway Employees, All:

I have just had the pleasure and privilege to be associated generally, and to work with specifically, so many fine people in the Montana Department of Highways. For eight eventful and satisfying years we journeyed into Helena (and other points) for infrequent meetings and details that needed the cooperation of each of you.

We who are leaving the Commission thank each of you for your contribution to a most effective highway program of the 80s—more than we ever thought possible when we came on board. Of course, we must above all, say a special expression of appreciation to department heads, and extra-assignment personnel, and extra plaudits to our recording secretary, for the many details performed, often under less than ideal conditions. So many made the Commission's duties much lighter, and "ironed out the wrinkles" in our approach to tough problems.

We hesitate to mention names, as we'll forget some, or because of their retirement, but we warmly greet each of you, and THANK YOU for being special.

We miss you, and our associations, but we've had a rare experience that we cannot forget—but for now as they say, "We'll fold our tents like the Arabs, and silently steal away".

With special thanks and appreciation, I remain

Most sincerely yours,

  
Ilert Hellebust, Chairman  
Montana Highway Commission

## Road Design Wins Again

I 15 through the Boulder River—Bison Creek Canyon north of Butte has been selected as an award winner in the Federal Highway Administration's Excellence in Highway Design program. The award, in the category of rural highway design, adds to a growing collection of awards received by the department in the biennial competition.

Entries are judged based on compatibility with surroundings, safety and functional efficiency, and visual and user appeal, according to Steve Kologi, Chief of the Preconstruction Bureau.

"This shows we can do just as good work, or maybe even better, than anyone in the country," Kologi said.

The I 15 project was chosen for the

award based in part on special design features that include fish habitat structures, specially designed retaining walls and vastly improved road alignment. It was among the last and one of the most difficult links in Montana's interstate system.

About a dozen entries were submitted by the department.

Bill Dunbar of the Federal Highway Administration presented the award to newly appointed Highway Commission Chairman Dan Huestis at a meeting in March. The award, which includes a large framed plaque and photo, will be displayed in the meeting room of the Highway Commission at headquarters. ♦

## ALF Goes to Work on I 90

ALF will be making a concerted effort to wear out a piece of interstate highway pavement in Montana beginning in May.

It's not the cat-eating, philosophizing alien life form of TV fame, but the United States Accelerated Loading Facility (U.S. ALF) that will put a piece of Montana pavement through the test of time.

And it does it in fairly short order. ALF simulates 20 years of truck traffic in two to three months, operating about 22 hours a day. According to Bob Rask, Materials Bureau Chief, ALF appears to be well-suited to evaluating rut-resistant asphalt concrete mixes developed over the last few years.

ALF was brought to Montana from the Pavement Testing Facility at Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center in McLean, Virginia. The design is based on a prototype designed by the Department of Main Roads in New South Wales, Australia. The Federal Highway Administration, the Wyoming Highway Department and several members of the Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (WASHTO) are participating in the test.

The pavement being tested, about six miles west of Columbus, was laid in 1986 using "anti-rutting specs" developed by the department with the WASHTO states. The test should give a fair reading of how the pavement designed to resist rutting really works. The machine will be pulled

off the pavement every two weeks so the "road rater" can test the pavement wear and a cross section will be cut at the end of the test to evaluate the mix.

The machine is about 95 feet long and over 12 feet wide. It has four motors powered by 480 volts of electricity.

When the Montana test is completed, ALF will be moved to a section of I 90 south of Lodge Grass in Wyoming. ♦

## Retirements

Recently retiring with over 30 years with the department were: **Frank T. Caprara, Jr.**, Dillon, 39 years, 10 months; **Harold J. Baker**, Superior, 36 years, 8 months; **Ross M. Johnson**, Lewistown, 32 years, 10 months; **Sheldon W. Stoner**, Helena, 31 years, 5 months; **Alvin L. Pierce**, Emigrant, 30 years.

Others recently retiring include: **Kenneth L. Cress**, Helena, 28 years, 8 months; **Wilber E. Frickel**, Helena, 26 years, 4 months; **Vernon D. Borden**, Missoula, 25 years, 2 months; **William K. Byrne**, Missoula, 19 years, 9 months; **Benny L. McKay**, Dutton, 12 years, 3 months; **Gary J. Wicks**, 8 years, 3 months; **Harold Nicholls**, Butte, 8 years, 1 month. ♦

## The Extra Mile

Winter maintenance was a whole new ballgame this year, with ol' man winter back in full force after what appeared to be an extended vacation. Maintenance crews had their hands full this year, a condition not made any easier by increasingly tight budgets.

So, it's encouraging to be reminded again that maintenance crews are among the department's best ambassadors. A fair share of complaints were logged, of course, but by and large the response to the maintenance effort in Montana is consistently positive.

People from out of state seem pleasantly surprised when they're advised the roads aren't closed for the winter in Montana.

Idaho has trouble keeping their roads open, but not so in Montana.

And those who commute to and from work on the highways occasionally call just to let folks know they appreciated having the roads cleared so early in the day. It's nice to know you're appreciated. ♦

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Know any state employees who are really good at their work? You might think there just aren't any, if the newspapers and pronouncements at the local coffee shops or in the state legislature are any indication.

But not so. Any one of us can probably quickly recite a list of names of people we work with in government who are professional, competent, dedicated workers. There are many, many of them. And they meet a high standard of performance by any measure.

This situation caused an employee to remark recently after having dealt with a local bank over some personal business that if we ran the highway department the way the bank was run, we'd be taken to task or forced out long ago. Know what I mean? ♦

The Seeley-Swan Highway, US 83 north of Clearwater Junction in western Montana, has been the source of controversy over the years and many of those issues will be difficult to resolve. The road can be especially hazardous in the winter, wildlife crosses the road frequently, with frequent accidents as a result. Consensus has been hard to reach on just what should be done to improve safety.

So it's nice to have some good news. Missoula District Maintenance Chief Rusty Wrigg attended a meeting earlier this year with a group called "Scenic 83"—people from the Seeley-Swan area interested in management of the highway corridor from a scenic and wildlife protection viewpoint. On the agenda was an award presentation for **Bruce Friede**, maintenance section man on the Rainy Lake section.

The "Certificate of Appreciation" presented to Friede read "For Dedicated Service in Maintaining Safe Driving Conditions on Montana Highway 83." A nice compliment, given the demands on that crew.

Nice work, Bruce! And thanks to the rest of the Missoula maintenance staff and the Rainy Lake section crew as well for putting public service high on the list. ♦

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**Lynn Predmore**, Location & Road Design, received a nice pat on the back recently. A Helena businessman was having trouble finding historical records on a piece of property, but had his problem solved not long after Predmore went to work on the case.

"Lynn was courteous, quick, and competent," the businessman wrote. "What I was asking wasn't easy to find, but his understanding of his job allowed him to try a number of different solutions and after many unsuccessful tries finally came up with the answer... It is fun working with state employees that do their job so well."

Good work, Lynn! That's what we like to see. ♦

The staff in the Billings office apparently makes friends easily. Several letters were received, all expressing thanks and gratitude for the help that was given during a particularly bitter cold snap not long ago.

**Ilene Eggum, Ernie Weidner and Frank Moore** made a good impression. They were "very professional, helpful and polite under extremely busy circumstances" according to one writer. Another wrote, "it was wonderful to find someone so willing to help us."

Need help—call "the highway!" ♦

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Several years ago state officials received a striking, poster-size photo taken on a gloomy, rainy day along US 2 near Libby. In the picture, ambulance crew members in bright yellow slickers stood near each of the seventeen white crosses, each signifying a lost life at the Lyons Spring Corner.

Warning signs were installed and improved over the years, but the real answer was to rebuild the curve and another one nearby called the Elk Hills Corner. Design work was underway at the time, but construction was still years away.

To make a long story short, the work was accelerated, the contract letting date was moved up, and the work was done. Then problems arose with the new alignment, problems that were addressed with more long hours of frustration and hard work.

The curves are gone now and the result is a big safety improvement. A recent letter from the American Legion of Montana, sponsors of Montana's white cross program, expressed thanks to the department and all the individuals responsible for the progress on the Elk Hills-Lyons Spring curves. Take one more section off the list of "Montana's Worst Roads." ♦



Twenty employees were honored for outstanding job performance at a ceremony held in Helena last September. Seated: Carolyn Chaussee, Diane Tordale, Leila Williams, Mitzi Rossillon. Standing: Gary Wicks, Anthony Malaschak, Curt Baker, Larry Williams, Charles Rigler, Jim Cearley, Roger Schultz, Robert Fischer, Dan Kiely, Bill Fullerton, Robert Charlton, Jeff Meyer, Sam Prestipino and Mark Cyr. Not pictured are Cindy Putnam, Michael Randall and Glenn Tonkin.

Also nominated for Outstanding Performance Awards were: Gerald Anders, Jay Andrew, Maurie Bahnsen, Judy Bauch, Joseph Bettle, Donald Bichler, Marjorie Blewett, Jack Brown, Raymond Brown, Michael Buckley, Carol Cook, Berwyn Endicott, Robert Ewing, Shirley Farley, Kim Hahn, Misty Hammerbacker, Dorie Heckathorn, Norman Hobby, Jack Holstrom, John Horton, Michael Hovan, Zachary Hunter, Dean Klakken, Marilyn Lindsay, Chadwin Lutey, Gary Martin, Barbara Martin, Thomas Martin, Joseph Micheletti, Ronald Myrvik, Shirley Neuhardt, Julie Nichols, Duane Nygard, Leonard Olson, Dawn Quinn, Ric Ranf, Edward Reiser, Jack Roberts, Leslie Saunders, Larry Sayre, Robert Scherding, Berdene Steen, Steve Stephenson, Murray Swenson, Jerome Toner, Russell Wrigg and Russell Yarnall.

## Mileposts

Service awards were presented recently to:

**30 years:** Donald Delmonica; Walter J. Erickson; Cecil W. Lincoln; Richard E. Wegner; Allan R. Allsop; Dean A. Klakken; Gerald L. Kuester; William W. Meech; Robert A. Passow; Allen C. Stenhjem; W. Glenn Tonkin.

**25 years:** Raymond G. Anderson; Douglas C. Gregory; Kenneth M. Katana; Ralph J. Keepers; Donald L. Niedge; Glenn A. Porter; Jon Schwefel; Robert E. Wagner; James F. Wilcox; Ralph F. Lee; Gary R. Marin; David E. Milot; Ronald L. Phillips; James A. Walker.

**20 years:** Clyde L. Mitchell; Jack

E. Ricch; David W. Bacon; Keenan D. Bingham; Daniel J. Tombrink; John C. Ulberg.

**15 years:** Ronald D. Russell; Tom J. Shupak; Colleen M. Stephenson; Frank M. Kitchingman; Charles A. Brand; Jerry L. Kind; Robert L. Mally; Douglas D. Moeller.

**10 years:** David E. Childers; Fredrick D. Clemow; Richard L. Craig; William E. McLean; Russell E. Rooney; Arthur W. Sarnow; Mary T. Spaulding; James R. Stevenson; Roy H. Symons; Ernest H. Weidner; Kim M. Beary; Jack G. Coil; Eugene W. Hansen; Walter H. Kochler; Samuel P. Montayne; Gary D. Noyes; Charles G. Ritchart.

**5 years:** Wendy Barthelmeh; Monte N. Brown; Meredith L. Cook; Edward W. Foy; David W. Jensen;

Mary P. McLaughlin; Bill Dean Sarsland; Beth Hennec; Charles J. Antos; Randal Scott Baldwin; Douglas A. Cahill; Tami L. Hembree; Richard A. Kershaw; John A. Lund; Steven R. Meyers; Thomas R. O'Sullivan; Patricia A. Rutherford; Ray J. Woods.♦

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